



LOUISIANA SHRIMP ASSOCIATION
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Andrew Lawler

Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Fisheries

Jim Sandford

Assistant US Trade Representative for Small Business,
Market Access and Industrial Competitiveness

Ref: RFI Response: Interagency Seafood Trade Task Force

Dear Sirs,

I am respectfully contacting you today on behalf of the members of Louisiana Shrimp Association (LSA). The Louisiana Shrimp Association is a nonprofit organization formed by commercial shrimpers throughout the State of Louisiana. Membership consists of commercial shrimp harvesters, finfish harvesters, wholesale and retail seafood dealers, statewide merchants, and individuals concerned about issues related to domestic seafood and shrimp production as well as the preservation of the culture and heritage of the traditional Louisiana shrimper.

LSA would also like to thank President Trump and everyone involved that created this much needed Interagency Seafood Task Force. We also thank everyone that will be sitting on this task force. You all have a great task at hand and we pray that you make a difference.

Today we are submitting our written concerns on an issue that is affecting our Louisiana Shrimp Industry as well as the entire Seafood Industry throughout the United States. Our American seafood harvesters can no longer survive unless the President of the United States steps forward on this issue. Each and every commercial seafood harvester is an American small business and our industry must be saved to save our communities.

Our number one issue is seafood imports. Our Association has traveled to Washington many times over the past years pleading for help on this issue. For almost 20 years we have pleaded and begged our past and present Representatives in DC to look into this and find solutions. We have worked closely with our local, state and federal representatives on this matter and continue to do so today. There have been numerous programs implemented and funds appropriated and we are very thankful for this. LSA feels that more needs to be done immediately.

The United States shrimp harvesters cannot survive today because we are unable to compete with these cheap imports. We need the President of the United States to look at this unlevel playing field. The US allows 1.5 Billion pounds of shrimp imports to enter the US yearly. It is estimated that the US consumes 1.2 Billion pounds per year. We are doomed before our harvest seasons even start. We began our May season in Louisiana at 35 cents per pound. I ask you, who can work at this price and keep up with the average consumer prices to live? Our fishermen work on average of 16-18 hours per day and to harvest one thousand pounds would bring in only \$350.00 for that catch. These low prices are due to the low prices shrimp imported here.

The American Shrimp Industry is on the brink of collapsing. We cannot compete with cheap imports that are filled with steroids, antibiotics and other chemicals that are being fed to our American citizens.

Anti-dumping duties have in the past helped our fishermen. These duties are no longer available to fishermen. The dumping duties that are collected today go directly into the US general. This funding could be better used to fight the influx of imports entering our country.

Foreign countries have learned how to get around tariffs being collected on their products rerouting through other countries. US Customs only inspects 1-2% of shrimp imports entering the United States, this is surely unacceptable. When the US denies entry of tainted shrimp products, instead of being destroyed, that product is denied and turned back over to the country of origin. Then they find other ports that would possibly ship it for them and get it entered into this into the US. This is called "port shopping". Slave labor, child labor and illegal harvesting of these imports are also of great concern.

The Byrd Act, which has now expired, was American legislation and was associated with its chief sponsor, Democratic Senator Robert Byrd of West Virginia. The act changed the disposition of funds raised from duties on imports that the US government had determined to be subsidized or otherwise unfairly priced. Our fishermen need to be subsidized or a cap put on the volume of seafood imports entering here.

Louisiana Shrimp Association and its members fought long and hard during anti-dumping lawsuits in Washington DC so that our harvesters would be compensated for their losses due to imports. Our members attended and testified at hearings on this issue. We spent large amounts of funding that was appropriated by our hard working harvesters so that we could be treated fairly and receive this subsidy.

The US is in a worldwide pandemic at this time and we are being told that imports are not being inspected due to covid-19. In this trying time with so many foreign countries trying to cause havoc and destroy the United States of America, we feel that this is the time to step up and do more thorough inspections. These foreign countries have an open gateway to send harmful food and agricultural products, seafood products or any imported products that may carry viruses, disease or any kind of harm to our great country.

LSA asks that you immediately bring this to the attention of President Trump. He has the power to make this right for every Shrimp Harvester in America, to make America great again!

If we can assist you in the future on any and all issues that we or other stakeholder groups may have, please feel free to contact me.

Please add our Association to your email list so that we can become involved with your questions and concerns and or receive any correspondence you may have concerning our seafood imports: acycooper@louisianashrimp.org

Sincerely,

Acy J Cooper Jr